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supplied—if accepted theories prevail. I believe that humanity, unsatisfied—not with religion but with dogmas and landmarks of the past—is seeking to orient itself anew. The religious compass of the world has varied as we have sailed west, and no prophet or priest has as yet risen to explain. Unlike the crew of Columbus, nothing but an explanation consistent with reason will be accepted. Humanity, like a bird upon her nest, is rustling its feathers and giving those indications of uneasiness which precede a flight. I confidently believe it will be a rising from the ground. The Sermon on the Mount and the Golden Rule will stand, but men will rise to a higher appreciation of them and a more practical application.

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## THE JAPANESE RELIGIONS AND CHRISTIANITY.

There are three forms of belief—the Shintoist, the Buddhist and the Confucian—which may be considered our national religions, as they are believed in, more or less, by the great mass of the people. Of these, Shintoism is the only indigenous one; Buddhism and Confucianism were introduced from abroad.

Shintoism is, however, less a religion than a ritualistic form of worship, which regards mainly natural phenomena, and is used in the Court ceremonies—a kind of adoration of certain natural objects; but it is a mere ceremonial and associated with no theological doctrines.

The classes of objects worshiped may be divided into three: To the first class belong the heaven and earth, moon and stars; to the second the Imperial ancestors, the chief of whom being Ten-sio-dai-sin, the great sun goddess. As regards spiritual exaltation, the Emperor is held to be the direct descendant of the sun goddess, and as such, he unites in his person all the attributes of the Deity, so that the hierarchy of Shintoism is composed of the emperor and the other priests of Kannushi. To the third class belong certain very numerous natural phenomena, as well as deceased statesmen, scholars, heroes or public benefactors, who receive a regular apotheosis and canonization at their death, and are henceforth reckoned among the Kami or demi-gods.

Every district has its saint or Kami, and the shrines erected to the popular divinities are innumerable. Shintoo temples are usually built on elevated ground and surrounded by groves. A mirror and Heisoku (a paper fixed to the end of a stick), as the emblems of the purity required in the worshipers, are placed on the altar.

Although this native religion has not a definite doctrine, its worshipers are required to observe:

1st. An inward purity of heart;

2d. An abstinence from whatever makes a man impure; and

3rd. A diligent observance of the solemn festivals and holy days.

The form of worship is simple; the worshipers first wash the hands in the font which is placed in either right or left side of the temple, strike a bell, clap the hands three times, and sometimes throw a little cash or rice in the money box, and bow and pray opposite to the mirror and Heisoku.

Buddhism in Japan, though extending over the whole country and influencing more or less the mass of the people, is losing its hold, and has very little of the power and authority it once possessed. Its edifices are going to decay and no new ones seem to rise upon their ruin. Its monks or Bozu are illiterate, and together with their religion, are held in contempt by the philosophic Japanese, so that aged people and women are now its chief devotees. Their duties consist chiefly in worshiping the temples, the periodical worship of tutelary divinities, reverence to parents, and the customary offerings at ancestral tombs.

The doctrine of Confucius as held by the literati of China, has considerable influence under the name of Judoo, or the way or the method of philosophy. Confucianism was the basis of the social and political system of the Japanese. It had been professed by all their greatest men, and was the sole belief of the educated classes, and still we witness some relics of it among them. It is, however, less a religion than a philosophy, and does not pretend to treat of spiritual things.

It is true that Confucius used several times through his works the word, Japanese, 'Jio-tei,'—Chinese, 'Shangtee,' whose outward emblem is, Jap. 'Tien,' Ch. 'Ten.' or the visible firmament; but this word "Ten" in the opinion of the most enlightened

authorities is nothing more than a verbal personification of the ever present law and order and intelligence which seem to breathe amid the wonderful activities of physical creation, in the measured circuit of the seasons, in the alternation of light and darkness, in the ebb and flow of tides, and in the harmonious, majestic revolutions of the heavenly bodies. Starting from this point of view we cannot treat his doctrine as that of spiritual teaching. In fact, he divided his scholars into four classes, aiming exclusively at fitting men for conducting themselves honorably and prudently in this life. To the first he taught morals; to the second rhetoric; to the third politics; and to the fourth, the perfection of their style in writing and composition. This fact throws light both on the character and design of his philosophy. Striving to direct the attention of men to the duties of social and political life, he taught the observance of the three fundamental laws of the relation between sovereign and subject, father and son, husband and wife; and the five capital virtues, humanity, uprightness, propriety, wisdom, and sincerity. It was unquestionably well suited to the mind of the Japanese during the feudal age.

Besides these three religions which alone affect the bulk of the people towards Christianity and Christians, there was another form of teaching which commonly was called the Budoo, a kind of military science of the feudal age in Japan. The Japanese soldiers—or Samurai, were compelled to study this science from their youth, and even in later days the common people were trying to study it. This science consists of the military tasks, which were exercises with horse, bow, musket, sword and spear. It may be from this science that our national characteristic so-called, Yomato dama-shii, has sprung up. This term is applied to the patriotic or loyal spirits among the conservative Japanese of to-day.

Indeed, our attitude towards Christianity was not simply that of mere objection founded on these religious prejudices; but also an intensely patriotic desire to preserve the integrity of our sacred country was at the bottom of all our ill-feeling towards the foreign religion. We hated Christianity and Christians, because these words were in our minds synonymous with whatever was opposed to the honor and independence of the nation. A marvelous change, however, has been wrought in our feeling and action towards Christianity in the past ten years. Indeed some have since turned earnest believers who were once strong opposers of Christianity, while the rest of the people no longer entertain sentiments of deadly hatred towards it. They willingly admit that the introduction of that religion into our country is highly beneficial, and it is scarcely too much to say that the whole nation is ready to welcome Christianity.

The Confucian philosophy, which had for more than two centuries sustained the morality of the nation, could no longer keep such advanced minds within the compass of its doctrine.

The reaction was set in; the anti-Chinese tendency soon became predominant, and the Confucian philosophy is no longer anxiously desired and appreciated. But you must not think from my expression above that the Confucian philosophy is altogether worthless and unsound. On the contrary, its doctrine with a few exceptions is admissible and practicable. Just here was the transient time of Japanese morality, and as an inevitable result, a class of would-be civilized people has sprung up whose sayings and conduct are inconsistent. This may be often seen among officials who by their profligate conduct set a very bad example to the public who have been comparatively faithful to the old moral code. It is to be regretted that we have still such impure and shameful examples among our distinguished gentlemen at home, and even among our representatives abroad. As a consequence, the sober portion of the nation is rightly alarmed at such an obnoxious condition of affairs, and for some years leading spirits have earnestly endeavored through the press and on platform to impress upon the minds of their country the importance of adopting a system of morality. Strange enough, the government attempted to reinstate the Chinese code of morals in the national educational system, but as a matter of course, the attempt was received by the

public with undisguised dissatisfaction. The nation at large has progressed too far in the path of Western civilization to turn any serious attention to Chinese philosophy or to Buddhism; and at least as far as morality goes, the intelligent classes readily admit that Christianity is the best system known. This is proved by their willingness to bring up their children in the Christian faith. Thus contemporaneously with the removal of the strong national prejudice against Christianity, a tendency has grown in its favor, if not from a conviction of the truth of its divine origin, at least from a belief in its efficiency as a moral system. Not only have obstacles been removed, but also encouragement is given for its introduction. Not only have the gates of the strongholds been thrown open, but also the garrisons within are inviting the entry of the army without. Yet the invading army stands before the front in an exceedingly inactive and timid attitude. It is however, true, that Christians are rapidly increasing in every quarter, but after the lapse of more than twenty years of evangelization the total number of Protestant converts barely amounts to 10,000, and that of Protestants and Catholics combined, to about 50,000—figures which when compared with a population of 37,000,000, and with the vastness of the opportunity opened for the prosecution of the work of evangelization, appears a mere bagatelle.

The causes of this strangely slow progress may be various, and their relative importance may be variously estimated by different persons. But the principal reason is the inability of missionaries to properly appreciate the national genius of the Japanese. We are seldom credited with faculties for abstract metaphysical speculation; but in religious matters, we, or at least the educated classes, are peculiarly rationalistic. Neither Buddhism, nor much less Shintoism, has ever received at our hands such an unquestioning belief as that which men place in Christianity in America and Europe. Our forefathers attended the religious services of Buddhism or Shintooism only as a matter of ceremony. The advanced school of the modern sciences of Europe has accordingly found a very congenial soil in the minds of the Japanese people. The system of national education has been modeled on a purely secular and scientific basis. Children are taught in school that all the wonderful phenomena they observe in nature are produced by the means of inviolable and eternal laws of the Almighty, and that nothing can happen but by the operation of such laws. In middle schools they are taught the same things, and finally in the University and the College, works of Spencer, Huxley, Darwin, Hæckel and other leading thinkers in Europe and America, are read extensively. Thus they arrive at clear and comprehensive views of that order of harmony and unbroken continuity of cause and effect so plainly discernible in the operation of natural laws. It may indeed be asserted with truth, that entirely free from all superstitious notions, either hereditary or acquired, the minds of the rising generation of Japan are being formed purely on a scientific basis. Ignorant of this positive fact—ignorant that in Japan they have to fight not against Buddhism and Shintooism but against the objections raised by modern science, and that these objections have acquired a great force in the minds of the Japanese, who are so exceptionally free from all belief in the supernatural, the propagandists of Christianity have all the time been prosecuting their labors much in the same spirit and according to the same method as though their work lay among a people at a far lower stage of civilization, such for instance as the nations of the South Sea Islands. The results obtained prove the fundamental error of this policy. The converts thus far made have been limited in ninety cases out of every hundred, to people of the lower classes. Very few indeed have been made in the educated classes. In a word, Christianity has not been presented to the Japanese mind in its rationalistic aspects.

I am fully convinced that Christianity in its rigid orthodox form will never obtain any general and firm hold over the mind of my countrymen. Hitherto the missionary societies of Europe and America have followed an erroneous policy in sending out men whose more fitting sphere would have been Africa or some of the South Sea Islands. There are of course

notable exceptions. Missionaries of wide experience and high culture have not been entirely wanting. But there is no gainsaying the fact that the general character of Christian propagandists has been rather low and not quite adapted to the conversion of the educated classes of the people. There is need of men of enlightened and liberal views, well versed in the knowledge of modern sciences, and then let them stay in the capital (Tokio) and endeavor by means of public lectures and through writing, to present the rationalistic side of Christianity, free from all the superfluous creeds, dogmas, and in some cases superstitions that have crept into the minds of the ordinary student of divinity in the West. Two or three years' stay of such men there, would do far more towards Christianizing the country than the work of many dozens of ordinary missionaries combined.

It would be a disgrace to our nationa- honor to rely entirely upon the philanl thropic people of America and Europe for the prosecution of evangelical work in our own land. True, at present, the number of native believers being comparatively small, and, further, most of them being poor, it is inevitable that we should look to the people of the West for assistance in the shape of both men and money. But our ultimate aim must be the establishment and maintenance by our own efforts of a church of Christ based on the simple truths of the Bible, inbued with the unsophisticated faith of the Christians, free from the dogmas that have accumulated in the theological literature of the West, and untainted with the unwholesome spirit of sectarian jealousies and contentions of which the past history of Christianity contains so many instances in America and Europe.

Japan may be a nation eminently fitted for the formation of such a church. There are more than 37,000,000 people, whose history has been entirely distinct from that of the Western nations, who have no sympathies with the sectarian strifes and animesities that so disfigure the history of European people, and who, at least the educated classes, are peculiarly rationalistic in matters of religion. To these people the truths of modern science have been and are being brought in their most advanced form. Guided by the light of those scientific truths, it will be possible, if only we work in the right direction, to erect among us a noble temple of the Christian God, unpolluted by the narrow, selfish and ungodly passions of mutual jealously, and undisgraced by human ignorance and bigotry.

What is really necessary now-a-days, is that we have competent men who can teach not only what Christ taught but what he would teach if he lived at the present day, and who can lay and solve the current social and political problems to their hearers.

S. MATSUMOTO.

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## FORCE AND GOD.

The scholar mused upon the forms that change
Yet onward move in ever-widening range.
"Eternal mid the transient, force alone,"
He said, "of all survives; so dark, unknown,
Here is the God Science reveals to man,
Further than this why should we seek to scan?"

Aided by art, the glories of the sky
In unveiled splendor burst upon the eye;
Beyond our sight the universe extends;
Infinity the mind scarce comprehends;
While worlds harmonious move in breathless awe,
We whisper, "God is here, and God is Law."

With passing years man's larger view expands;
He owns the tie that binds all times, all lands.
Unconsciously we work for common ends,
The stream knows not whereto the river tends.
Towards righteousness the world is moving still,
Since onward swept by the Eternal Will.

Infinite worlds are hid from human sight,
Infinite ages lost in time's dark night.
Yet everywhere God's love and care displayed,
Why should we tremble, by such power dismayed?
Is there one human life to Him unknown?
He were not God, could He forget his own.

Thus feebly, Lord, we strive to lisp Thy name,
Too weak our thought more fitting speech to frame.
Thy works reveal Thy attributes divine,

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